

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1     1. A current supply system, comprising:

2             a plurality of current supply modules, wherein each current supply module includes  
3             an input terminal and an output terminal and each current supply module has a maximum  
4             output power, and wherein multiple current supply modules are electrically combined to  
5             form a current supply unit having a maximum output power that is greater than the  
6             maximum output power of the individual current supply modules;

7             a control unit connected to the current supply unit; and

8             a data connection for connecting the control unit to all the current supply modules of  
9             the current supply unit.

1     2. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein the current supply system is a plasma  
2     plant current supply system.

1     3. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein the current supply modules are power  
2     converters.

1     4. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein the maximum output power of all the  
2     current supply modules is substantially the same.

1     5. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein a plurality of first current supply systems  
2     are electrically combined to form a first current supply unit having a first maximum  
3     power output and a plurality of second current supply systems are electrically combined  
4     to form a second current supply unit having a second maximum power output different  
5     from the first maximum power output.

1     6. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein each current supply module includes a  
2     receptacle for receiving the control unit, and wherein exactly one current supply module  
3     of each current supply unit receives the control unit.

1     7. The current supply system of claim 6, wherein the current supply module that receives  
2     the control unit is adapted for connection to an external controller.

- 1 8. The current supply system of claim 7, wherein the external controller is a computer.
- 1 9. The current supply system of claim 6, wherein the control unit is adapted for connection  
2 to an external controller.
- 1 10. The current supply system of claim 9, wherein the external controller is a computer.
- 1 11. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein each current supply module includes a  
2 measuring device for measuring a current supply module output quantity.
- 1 12. The current supply system of claim 11, wherein the output quantity is selected from the  
2 group consisting of a voltage, a current, and a power.
- 1 13. The current supply system of claim 11, wherein each measuring device includes a signal  
2 matching circuit for converting a voltage, a voltage/current converter for converting the  
3 output voltage of the signal matching circuit into a current, and an apparent ohmic  
4 resistance for generating a voltage drop.
- 1 14. The current supply system of claim 11, wherein the measuring signals of the current  
2 supply modules are supplied to the current supply unit of the control unit in parallel via  
3 the data connection.
- 1 15. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein the current supply system is disposed in a  
2 switching cabinet.
- 1 16. The current supply system of claim 1, wherein the current supply modules are current  
2 sources.
- 1 17. The current supply system of claim 1, further comprising an interlock circuit for the  
2 current supply unit, wherein the interlock circuit is adapted for connection to the current  
3 supply modules of the current supply unit.

1 18. The current supply system of claim 1, further comprising:

2 a common input electrical conductor for electrically connecting the current supply  
3 modules of the current supply unit at the output side; and

4 a common output electrical connector that electrically connects the output terminals  
5 of two neighboring current supply modules.

1 19. The current supply system of claim 18, wherein two or more current supply modules of  
2 the current supply unit are electrically connected at the input side.

1 20. The current supply system of claim 19, wherein all the current supply modules are  
2 electrically connected at the input side.

1 21. The current supply system of claim 18, wherein the common input electrical conductor is  
2 identical to the common output electrical conductor.

1 22. The current supply system of claim 18, wherein the input terminal includes a plurality of  
2 connectors that correspond to a number of phases of a power line connection, and the  
3 output terminal includes two connectors, which are disposed in different conductor  
4 planes, and through which the conductors may be connected to corresponding connectors  
5 of neighboring current supply modules.

1 23. The current supply system of claim 18, further comprising insulative distribution  
2 elements for connecting the conductors with the terminals, wherein the distribution  
3 elements each comprise receptacles for receiving ends of the conductors.

1 24. A plasma plant current supply system, comprising:

2 a plurality of substantially similar power converter modules, wherein each power  
3 converter module includes an input terminal and an output terminal, and each power  
4 converter module has a maximum output power that is substantially similar to the  
5 maximum output power of other power converter modules, and wherein multiple power  
6 converter modules are combined to form a current supply unit having a maximum output

7 power that is greater than the maximum output power of the individual power converter  
8 modules;

9 a control unit connected to the current supply unit;

10 a data connection for connecting the control unit to all the power converter modules  
11 of the current supply unit;

12 a common input electrical conductor for electrically connecting the current power  
13 converter modules of the current supply unit at the output side; and

14 a common output electrical connector that electrically connects the output terminals  
15 of two neighboring power converter modules.

1 25. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein a plurality of first current supply systems  
2 are electrically combined to form a first current supply unit having a first maximum  
3 power output and a plurality of second current supply systems are electrically combined  
4 to form a second current supply unit having a second maximum power output different  
5 from the first maximum power output.

1 26. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein each current supply module includes a  
2 receptacle for receiving the control unit, and wherein exactly one current supply module  
3 of each current supply unit receives the control unit.

1 27. The current supply system of claim 26, wherein the current supply module that receives  
2 the control unit is adapted for connection to an external controller.

1 28. The current supply system of claim 27, wherein the external controller is a computer.

1 29. The current supply system of claim 26, wherein the control unit is adapted for connection  
2 to an external controller.

1 30. The current supply system of claim 29, wherein the external controller is a computer.

1 31. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein each current supply module includes a  
2 measuring device for measuring a current supply module output quantity.

1 32. The current supply system of claim 31, wherein the output quantity is selected from the  
2 group consisting of a voltage, a current, and a power.

1 33. The current supply system of claim 31, wherein each measuring device includes a signal  
2 matching circuit for converting a voltage, a voltage/current converter for converting the  
3 output voltage of the signal matching circuit into a current, and an apparent ohmic  
4 resistance for generating a voltage drop.

1 34. The current supply system of claim 31, wherein the measuring signals of the current  
2 supply modules are supplied to the current supply unit of the control unit in parallel via  
3 the data connection.

1 35. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein the current supply system is disposed in  
2 a switching cabinet.

1 36. The current supply system of claim 24, further comprising an interlock circuit for the  
2 current supply unit, wherein the interlock circuit is adapted for connection to the current  
3 supply modules of the current supply unit.

1 37. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein two or more current supply modules of  
2 the current supply unit are electrically connected at the input side.

1 38. The current supply system of claim 37, wherein all the current supply modules are  
2 electrically connected at the input side.

1 39. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein the common input electrical conductor is  
2 identical to the common output electrical conductor.

1 40. The current supply system of claim 24, wherein the input terminal includes a plurality of  
2 connectors that correspond to a number of phases of a power line connection, and the  
3 output terminal includes two connectors, which are disposed in different conductor

4 planes, and through which the conductors may be connected to corresponding connectors  
5 of neighboring current supply modules.

1 41. The current supply system of claim 24, further comprising insulative distribution  
2 elements for connecting the conductors with the terminals, wherein the distribution  
3 elements each comprise receptacles for receiving ends of the conductors.

1 42. A method of providing an electrical current, the method comprising:  
2 providing a plurality of current supply modules, wherein each current supply module  
3 includes an input terminal and an output terminal and each current supply module has a  
4 maximum output power;  
5 establishing an electrical connection between multiple current supply modules to  
6 form a current supply unit having a maximum output power that is greater than the  
7 maximum output power of the individual current supply modules;  
8 controlling the current supply unit with a control unit; and  
9 controlling the current supplied by each current supply module through a data  
10 connection that connects the control unit to all the current supply modules of the current  
11 supply unit.

1 43. The method of claim 42, further comprising:  
2 establishing an electrical connection between multiple first current supply modules to  
3 form a first current supply unit having a first maximum power output; and  
4 establishing an electrical connection between multiple second current supply modules  
5 to form a second current supply unit having a second maximum power output different  
6 from the first maximum power output.